Interactive Teaching Techniques that Bring the Real World to the Classroom Experience

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The struggle to make the material we present as marketing professors relevant to real world business practices has been well documented by the literature (Manzon, 2017; Hunt & Laverie, 2004). The profession has employed a number of strategic weapons, experiential learning (Hawtrey, 2007; Frontczak, 1998) flip the classroom (Findlay-Thompson & Mombourquette, 2014; Green, 2015) cooperative learning (Schmidt, 2003; Cameron, 1998) to name a few, to bridge the gap between theory and practice. This special session will present methods that demonstrated success in exposing students to current challenges that they are mostly to face as they enter into their respective professions.

The Final Review Game
In International Consumer Behavior, student groups are asked to participate in a final review game which they compete against other groups for extra credit points. The 1st group answering a question correctly received the points. This exercise exposes students to current events, asking them to analysis each situation using the concepts taught during the class. The competitive nature of this game creates high energy as well as reviewing major concepts that were covered on the final. Below is a sampling of the questions:
1.   What went wrong with the frozen fish staking pond in Japan's Space World theme park? Name the relevant consumer behavior concept…. (answer: violate of norms—unwritten rules)
2.   The "10 Surprising Ways To Offend People In Other Countries" video demonstrates the importance of understanding _____ _____ in the international arena. (Answer: nonverbal communication)
            https://youtu.be/vDeq9LT6YAM

3.   Fill in the blank from the Pros vs Cons of Standardization power point slides.   (answer: standardization)

Writing up Their Own Critical Incidents
In the Services Marketing class, students are required to log seven different incidents they encountered throughout the quarter. Half of them should be good service encounters and half what they considered bad. They have to describe the incident, why they considered it good/bad. At the end of the quarter, they have to pick one good and one bad and apply the concepts in class to the incidents as they analyze the situations and make recommendations for improvement.

This forces students to pay close attention to what they normally took for granted. They now have to approach each encounter with a critical eye if not during the encounter, shortly after.

Marketing Research and Real World Businesses
In Marketing Research class, student groups work with real world businesses on their research projects. They are required to conduct research on a selected marketing problem based on the business partner's needs, starting from background studies to various research tools, analysis, and recommendations. The objectives of the project are: (1) provide some experience in applying concepts and methods of marketing research to a real marketing research problem; (2) to understand the process of utilizing market research to serve firm needs. These projects provide our students with the opportunity to develop their knowledge skills and abilities in an environment which cultivates their competencies for employability. They also benefit the greater community and build positive awareness of our university for the broader public.

Students and Real World Businesses
In IBM 300, Principles of International Business, we replace a traditional in-class group project and presentation with X-Culture, a third party program that aggregates thousands of business students, divides them into teams of about 5-6 students from different countries and cultures, and connects them with a market expansion problems posed by real companies. This allows students to internationally distributed, multi-time zone, virtual teams, on real business projects – exposing them to the joys and frustrations of international teamwork, and creating an incubator to develop employable skills.

To encourage development of in-class support systems, a carefully planned series of face-to-face activities integrated in my classroom time allows students to continue to hone their skills while creating connections with their classmates. They may spend time discussing outstanding team issues, clarify questions about their projects, or present their work thus far to a small group of peers. By balancing virtual work with in-person support, we bring the real world to the students, while equipping them to succeed.

Baby Steps for "Flipping"
Flipping the classroom has been one of the hottest pedagogical techniques in recent years across fields of business education. In a "flipped" classroom, the traditional teaching-centered approach of the instructor giving lectures while students taking notes, is reversed, where students become the center of the learning experience – "lectures" are taught outside of the class and the class time is used for helping students use the material in collaborative and interactive ways. Despite its popularity among innovative educators, "flipping the classroom" still sounds like a daunting idea for many instructors who are intimidated by the drastic approach of relying on technology and student-centered design of learning to achieve the same learning outcomes. In this section, the discussant(s) will reflect upon some small incremental steps taken in a large-format introductory marketing class, to move to a "flipped classroom". Implications and lessons learned from using technology-assisted online and offline learning systems, individual and team-based coaching, small "pair-and-share" interactive exercises, and other manageable pedagogical techniques for a successful transition to a fully "flipping classroom" will be discussed.

Interactive: Digital Marketing Tools and Real World Businesses

In designing the e-Marketing course curriculum, my goal was to create a hands-on learning experience where every student leaves prepared to enter the job market with the essential digital marketing skills. Many of the students began the class with no prior experience, and by the end of the quarter were able to create SEO and social media campaigns with ease. During Spring 2017, we partnered with a new local company, DiamonDance, to help them grow their business with a digital marketing campaign. This project exemplified the learn-by-doing methodology, and gave students hands-on training for areas that employers are looking for such as pay-per-click ads (using Google Ads), infographics (using Piktochart), social media images (using Canva) and promotional videos (using AdobeSpark).

Another interactive teaching technique is in the Buyer Behavior course, where students learn how to utilize the design-thinking process in order to create a mobile application. The purpose of this assignment is to teach students to solve a problem for a specific consumer group, and to foster students' critical thinking and technology skills (Schiele, 2015). Design thinking is recognized for its effectiveness in bringing out innovation and change, and there has been growing interest in utilizing this in marketing curriculum (Love, Stone, & Wilton, 2011). Education research has also recognized that students need to be creative, not just analytical (McCorkle, Payan, Reardon, & Kling, 2007; Titus, 2007), and integrating design thinking in the classroom can enhance students' creative skills. This assignment created a high-impact learning experience for students, and their engagement strengthened retention of knowledge, and gave them the confidence to implement these skills in their careers.

"I Can't Do This Alone Guys"- The Use of Discussion as a Pedagogical Instrument in Teaching
The use of discussion between instructor and students is quite common. Even as the classroom has moved online, its value translated well with the development of discussion boards for instance. Fundamentally, the potency of a discussion between the instructor and students relies on the quality of information shared between both parties. In the end, the hope is that both parties come away with knowledge from an alternate perspective. The fortune of working at a learning institution where students have various backgrounds, the infusion of discussion has the potential to result in very rewarding experiences for all parties involved.
Below you will find a table that summarizes activities and desired outcomes.

Activity	Description	Desired Outcome
Ice breaker	Short introduction of students by fellow classmates	It offers the opportunity for the students present and to learn about each other
Collection of student information	Index cards that have basic information about each student for the instructor (name, etc.)	The instructor is able to match names with faces more effectively

Random cold calling	The instructor calls on students in this manner	The students appear more likely to follow the class discussion and are better able to think on their feet
Selection of course-related questions that result in students giving answers that may be different (depends on the course offered)	The instructor asks questions that generate discussion since the answers may vary ("Is the customer always right?" or "Is it prudent to purchase medical procedures if offered at a discount?" for example)	The students have an opportunity to share their personal experiences and views on the subject(s).
Selection of course-related questions that result in students giving answers that may have individual meaning	The instructor asks questions that generate discussion and lighten the mood – "Is there anything wrong with dating online?" or "Do we really need to wash and rinse our hair two times per the shampoo instructions?	The students bring their own opinions and experiences into the fray and attempt to connect their answers to the subject matter being covered with the assistance of the instructor
Current Events Presentation	Students choose an article and must commit to agreeing or disagreeing with the author	The audience, after viewing the student presentation, are encouraged to offer their feedback
Perceptual map exercise	Students compare eating locations based on price and service	The students may have different opinions and have a chance to openly disagree with their contemporaries

The goal in fostering discussion in class can be to empower the students and give them a chance to offer their contributions to the classroom environment. In order to achieve success, the instructor must create an atmosphere where all student opinions have the same degree of worth

in the eyes of the students. Overall, the purpose of integrating discussion is for students to gain confidence in communicating inside the classroom and beyond. The activities above can help in this process.

Improv in the Sales Classroom

To succeed in business, salespeople must have the ability to listen closely to clients, appear genuine, and when necessary, pivot during stressful situations. Mastering these skills tends to create positive perceptions of the salespeople, as they appear both confident and trustworthy in the eyes of customers. In an advanced sales class, we built on some best practices that are employed in MBA programs at leading universities, which involves teaching improvisational techniques. In collaboration with our Theater Department, we arranged for a professional actor/director that is on the faculty to provide instruction to students on improvisational techniques used in theater training. Students learned a number of skills. These started with relaxation techniques, and then moved to exercises that required them to be genuinely in the moment in an interaction by abandoning social scripts or self-editing. In other exercises, students might instantly respond with a "yes" to a situation given, and learn how to flow in the moment. They quickly reduced their fears in stressful situations such as handling buyer objections and became accustomed to reacting naturally without fear. Students found the class stimulating and overwhelmingly positive. We also observed that they also came away with greater confidence in themselves.

Video Segments Leading to Effective Learning

An alternative way to engage student participation in an intro to marketing class of 120 students, when most students are not marketing majors, but must take the intro to marketing class as a degree requirement. Traditionally would be to have them read the chapters and come prepared for class discussion another way would be to lecture on the chapter and hope the students will then read it after the class is over yet a third one would be to have the students watch short specifically created video segments discussing the topics of each chapter and a clear simple direct way with supporting power points and then having students come to class and break up in groups and discuss the concepts given in the video presentations and applying them in a class discussion using current examples that relate to their every day life.This is the approach that was used in the fall of 2017 for the IBM 301 class of 120 students who all signed up for the video presentations and watched chapter by chapter, came prepared to class and discussed the presentations in the classroom setting by sharing with each others personal experiences and examples which illustrated the different topics subject matter and chapter subjects and concepts. 4 pop quizzes through the quarter kept students motivated as well to be prepared.

For non business and non marketing majors this method succeeded in not only gaining student involvement, engagement, but also students gained interest in a subjuct they were only taking as a degree requirement. The outcome was more class participation, classroom interaction and positive student learning.

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